



Army Fee Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions

This document is designed to support Army families in applying, recertifying and making changes in their enrollment in the Army Fee Assistance (AFA) child care subsidy program.

This is a living document and we will continue to update it as new information comes available.

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The Army Fee Assistance Program (AFA) is administered by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). GSA's contact information for the program is as follows:

GSA Child Care Website:

<http://www.gsa.gov/childcaresubsidies>

AFA Program Contact Information:

Phone: (866) 508-0371 (Option 1 for Families then Option 1 for Army)

Call Center Hours of Operation:

8:00 AM EDT - 6:00PM EDT

Monday through Friday excluding federal holidays

Fax: (816) 823-5410

Invoice Fax: (816) 926-3642

Email: army.childcare@gsa.gov

Invoice Email: armyinvoices.childcare@gsa.gov

Provider Web Pages:

Child Care Provider Directory: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/205843>

Child Care Provider Page: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/107371>

Mailing Address:

GSA Subsidy Administration Section

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Kansas City, MO 64108

Table of Contents

Program Overview	7
What is Army Fee Assistance?	7
Isn't child care an entitlement?	7
Who is eligible to receive Army Fee Assistance in community-based off-post programs?	7
How do I know if my child is eligible?	8
How much fee assistance is provided for off-post child care?	8
What costs does Army Fee Assistance cover?	8
What kind of child care is covered under this program?	8
How do I know if my community child care provider is eligible and what do I do if they are not?	9
How do I enroll in Army Fee Assistance for community-based child care?	9
What supporting documents do I need for my Army Fee Assistance application?	9
My spouse/partner is self-employed. What documentation do I need to submit to GSA for proof of employment?	10
When can I begin receiving Army Fee Assistance benefits?	10
Who receives the subsidy payments?	10
How does my provider bill GSA for their services?	10
Are there ongoing requirements after my initial application?	10
Where do I get help if I am having problems with my Army Fee Assistance application or payment?	10
Eligibility	11
I am using a Department of Defense (DoD) Child Development Center; will I qualify for a benefit?	11
Can I receive Army Fee Assistance benefits if I work but my spouse/partner stays at home with younger children?	11
What type of care is covered for school-age children?	11
Can I receive Army Fee Assistance if my child goes to a school-age program that is not licensed? My state does not require school-age programs to be licensed.	11
Will the Army subsidize tuition for private/charter school for school-age children?	11
Does my child have to receive care year round for me to be eligible for a subsidy?	11
My child attends a before/after school program during the school year, but attends all day on school holidays. How much subsidy will I be eligible for?	11
What if I send my child for summer care or during other school holidays and breaks?	12
Can I receive Army Fee Assistance for summer child care if I work, but my spouse stays at home with our children?	12

What about overnight camps?	12
My child will be attending a before and/or after school program located in my child's/children's school. Will this program qualify?.....	12
Do any other special family circumstances affect eligibility?	12
My Provider	12
What types of child care programs qualify?	12
How do I change providers?	13
My provider has changed their banking information. What documentation is needed by GSA?	13
Can Army Fee Assistance affect other subsidies that I am currently receiving from my child care provider?	13
What providers are eligible?	14
My provider charges a separate fee for enrollment and an annual registration fee. Would these fees be covered under this program benefit?	14
My child care provider offers special classes and field trips that I would like my child to attend. Would these fees be covered?	14
Submitting Applications	14
How can I apply?	14
Who will review my application?	15
If my spouse or partner cannot sign the required documents, how do we proceed?	15
If we are a dual military family who are both Army, which parent should submit the application?	15
I was told that I need to complete the Recertification process / recertify for benefits. Why am I required to complete this process since I'm already enrolled?	15
I would like to enroll my child in the program; however, he or she will not be starting right away. When should I submit my application for benefits?	15
Is there any appeal process if my application is denied?	15
What is the status of my application?	16
Will families have to resubmit documentation if there have been no changes to financial arrangements?	16
How long does the application process take? When will I be informed of my benefit?	16
Enrollment Changes	16
How do I add a child or children to the child care subsidy program?.....	16
My child care provider has informed me that my child care rate is changing. What do I need to do? .	16
I wish to remove one of my children from the program; however my other child/children will remain enrolled. How do I complete this process?	17
I will be relocating due to a PCS move but wish to remain in the program, what do I need to do?	17

I have completed my PCS move and need to re-enroll. What does GSA need from me?	17
What happens if I get married, divorced, separated or experience a change in my personal living arrangements. Does this affect my benefit?	17
I no longer need the benefit and would like to be removed from program. What should I do?	20
We just learned that we are having a baby; when can we enroll our child in the program?	20
My child will be spending the summer with her/his father/mother and I won't be needing child care. What do I need to do?	20
My spouse/partner or I will be returning from deployment . What does GSA need from us?	21
My spouse's/partner's deployment will soon be over. Will we still qualify for Army Fee Assistance?	21
My spouse/partner's deployment will be coming to end. How long are we eligible for benefits?	22
My spouse/partner is/will no longer be in an Activated Status. What does GSA need from us?	22
Subsidy Determination	22
What is Total Family Income (TFI) and how is it calculated?	22
Why is the allowance for housing included in the total family income computation?	22
How is TFI calculated for non-related families or non-married couples and for couples who are geographically separated?	23
How is the income of spouses or partners who work on commission and who do not have a previous tax return calculated?	23
How is the income for individuals who own their own business calculated?	23
What happens if I do not provide the required income documents to determine my TFI Category?	23
Do families having more than one child enrolled in child care receive a discount under AFA?	24
Does the Army have to follow the DoD Child Care Fee Policy?	24
Will I need to have my TFI category revalidated?	24
Is there an upper income limit on subsidy eligibility?	24
Is there a maximum amount of subsidy that can be paid to a provider for a family?	24
How does being a Geo-Bachelor affect my benefit?	24
Inactive Status	24
I will not need the benefit for the summer or while my child is with a relative during the summer, winter break, spring break, etc. What do I need to do?	24
How can I be placed in an Inactive Status?	25
How do I reactivate my benefit when my child/children return to child care?	25
Benefits	25
How can my spouse/partner obtain information about my benefit if I am unable to contact GSA due to my deployment or in my absence?	25

My provider changed their rate and I just received my updated benefit letter. Why did my portion stay the same?	25
Invoices	26
I understand that the Army requires that I sign each invoice submitted to GSA for payment. Why is this required?	26
I understand that the Army requires that I sign the invoices submitted to GSA. If I am deployed or unable to sign, can someone else sign in my absence?	26
Subsidy Payments	26
How do I know if/when my child care provider is being paid?	26
How often are payments made to providers?.....	26
My application was approved for the Annual Two Week Enrollment Credit (ATWEC). I don't understand.	27
Appendix	27

Program Overview

The U.S. Army Child, Youth & School Services and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), through the Army Fee Assistance Program (AFA), are helping Army families find affordable child care that suits their unique needs. Through the AFA Program families are eligible to receive monthly fee assistance to help offset the cost of child care in their communities.

What is Army Fee Assistance?

It is the Army's contribution toward the total cost of child care for Army families. When on-post care is not available, AFA buys down the cost of care, allowing eligible families to pay fees based on those charged at Army installations.

Isn't child care an entitlement?

Department of Defense (DoD) child care is not an entitlement. Child care is a readiness issue and priority for child care is given to working families, but even for these families, military child care is not always available. The demand is high and spaces are limited. The Military Child Care Act of 1989, codified in Section 568 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1996, requires DoD to establish a uniform fee schedule based on family income. Patrons who use DoD child care programs pay for services. Parent fees account for a portion of the cost of child care. The remaining child care costs are paid with appropriated funds authorized by Congress.

Who is eligible to receive Army Fee Assistance in community-based off-post programs?

Soldiers and Department of Army civilians who cannot obtain child care on an Army installation due to geographic location or long wait lists are eligible. Families must select Army Fee Assistance care providers who meet minimum quality standards in order to qualify. Families enrolled in on-post or off-post child care operated by the military may not receive Army Fee Assistance support. Spouses / partners must meet minimum hour requirement for work or school.

You may be eligible to receive a subsidy if you are one of the following:

- Families of Active and Reserve Component Soldiers (Guard and Reserve Soldiers must be activated to be eligible).
- Department of the Army Civilians and those assigned to Army-supported Joint Bases.
- Survivors of Fallen Soldiers
- Wounded Warriors assigned to a Warriors in Transition Battalion (WTB) or Unit (WTU) or Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

- For all eligible soldiers, spouses must be working a minimum of 16 hours or be enrolled in school at least 3 credits for graduate level or 6 credits for undergraduate level.

Eligibility is based on Total Family Income (TFI), the final child care costs after any and all other discounts and the maximum benefit of \$1,200 per month per child. Army Sponsors are responsible for their portion of their total child care costs, and in many cases AFA will pay the difference, directly to your qualifying child care provider.

How do I know if my child is eligible?

In order for the Sponsor to receive AFA benefits, the child must be under the age of 13, a legal dependent of the Sponsor and enrolled in child care for at least 16 hours per week.

How much fee assistance is provided for off-post child care?

The intent is that Army Fee Assistance Program parent fees are similar to on-post parent fees. Army Fee Assistance is calculated individually for each family and child based on multiple criteria. It varies from family to family and child to child, even for those using the same providers. The amount for each child is based on Total Family Income, hours of parent work and/or school attendance, child care requirements, provider rates, geographic location and Army installation parent fees.

What costs does Army Fee Assistance cover?

- Annual child registration fees (up to \$150 per child);
- Full-day care (25+ hours per week);
- Part-time care (16-25 hours per week);
- Before and after school and summer school age care;
- Respite Care (5-16 hours/ child / month) if eligible;
- Discounts for multiple eligible children
- Discounts for eligible deployment
- Discounts for eligible Wounded Warriors and Survivors of Fallen Soldiers

What kind of child care is covered under this program?

The childcare that parents choose must be State licensed and inspected by licensing authorities annually. Providers must be in good standing with State licensing authorities.

How do I know if my community child care provider is eligible and what do I do if they are not?

Any Army family who cannot obtain child care on an Army installation may contact the Army Fee Assistance administrator, GSA, to identify providers participating in the Army Fee Assistance Program. GSA's child care website can be found at gsa.gov/childcaresubsidies. Select the page on the left-hand menu titled For Providers to find a Provider Directory. If you are using a provider that is not yet enrolled in the program, the provider will need to be enrolled before your application can be approved. The provider can find the enrollment application on this web page. He or she may also contact GSA by phone at 816-823-5499.

How do I enroll in Army Fee Assistance for community-based child care?

Families and community child care providers must complete the Army Fee Assistance application found at www.gsa.gov/childcaresubsidies. Supporting documents must be submitted with the application or faxed, per instructions, to demonstrate eligibility and TFI.

What supporting documents do I need for my Army Fee Assistance application?

Families are required to submit the following documents in addition to their application:

- Orders, Department of Army DA 3434 or SF50, or orders assigning to a WTU or WTB for Wounded Warriors;
- Military or Civilian Sponsor Leave & Earnings Statement (LES) for the most recent 30 day period;
- [Certification of Availability / Non-Availability](#) of on-post child care. (This form is not required of Recruiters and other geographically dispersed Sponsors, those who are assigned to a non-Army managed base, and those whose children are school age.);
- [Provider Cost Verification Form \(Ages 0 - Preschool\)](#) or [Provider Cost Verification Form \(Ages 5 - 12\)](#) completed and signed by your provider and submitted with the Sponsor's application;
- Divorce, custody and separation agreements if applicable;
- For employed spouses or partners, pay statement(s) for the most recent consecutive two weeks.
- For self-employed spouses or partners, a [Certification of Self Employment Form](#) and Federal Tax Return 1040, including Schedule C, if filed separately from the Sponsor;
- For spouses or partners attending school, a [Certification of Higher Education Form](#) and school schedule.
- Providers are required to submit the following documents in addition to their application: a copy of their state license; accreditation certificate if applicable;

Child Development Associates credential if applicable; copy of their most recent state inspection report; and a copy of their fee schedule and available discounts.

My spouse/partner is self-employed. What documentation do I need to submit to GSA for proof of employment?

You will be required to complete and submit the [Certification of Self Employment, Army Form 2011-03](#). Also required are the first two pages of the spouse/partner's Federal Tax Form 1040 and Schedule C if filed separately.

When can I begin receiving Army Fee Assistance benefits?

If you apply and are eligible, you will be notified of when your subsidy will begin.

The benefit will become effective the first of the month in which you apply or your child's first day at the qualifying child care center, whichever is the later of the two dates. You cannot begin receiving the subsidy until you have submitted the application and supporting documents, and have been approved for Army Fee Assistance.

Who receives the subsidy payments?

Payments will be issued directly to your qualifying child care provider, *not* directly to you. GSA will make electronic payments or issue a U.S. Treasury check directly to your child care provider.

How does my provider bill GSA for their services?

Once your application for Army Fee Assistance is approved, you and your provider will receive a benefit package including invoices for each child and invoicing instructions.

Are there ongoing requirements after my initial application?

Every year the Army requires that each Sponsor/family complete the annual re-certification process, which is a verification of your Total Family Income and your continued eligibility based upon the program's current guidelines. You will be notified via your Army email address or address that you authorize for GSA communications of the documents and information needed to complete this process each year that you wish to receive a subsidy under the Army Fee Assistance Program.

Where do I get help if I am having problems with my Army Fee Assistance application or payment?

Call GSA at 816-508-0371 or write to army.childcare@gsa.com with general inquiries or questions about your application.

Eligibility

I am using a Department of Defense (DoD) Child Development Center; will I qualify for a benefit?

No. The program is available for off-post child care when on-post care is not available to the Sponsor due to space limitations or because the Sponsor is a recruiter or otherwise geographically dispersed.

Can I receive Army Fee Assistance benefits if I work but my spouse/partner stays at home with younger children?

In order to qualify for Army Fee Assistance, the Sponsor's spouse/partner must be working or attending school.

What type of care is covered for school-age children?

School-age programs include before and after school care, as well as full day care during non-school days such as school breaks and summer vacation. Such programs are delivered in a variety of locations, such as schools, churches, child care centers, recreation centers, and private homes. Wherever the school-age program occurs, it must meet the Army requirements to receive a subsidy under the Army Fee Assistance Program. The policy that governs the Army Fee Assistance Program requires that programs are state licensed and have annual state inspections. The subsidy cannot be paid when parents employ a nanny at home, or use unregulated care.

Can I receive Army Fee Assistance if my child goes to a school-age program that is not licensed? My state does not require school-age programs to be licensed.

If your provider states that they are exempt, they must voluntarily become licensed in order to participate in the Army Fee Assistance Program.

Will the Army subsidize tuition for private/charter school for school-age children?

The Army Fee Assistance Program, like all other Federal Child Care Subsidy Programs, does not cover or pay for any school related costs during the school day including kindergarten.

Does my child have to receive care year round for me to be eligible for a subsidy?

No. Whether you use child care 12 months of the year or only for portions of the year such as the three summer months, your eligibility is based on the Sponsor's status and availability of installation child care.

My child attends a before/after school program during the school year, but attends all day on school holidays. How much subsidy will I be eligible for?

For school-age children, your benefit will adjust (if approved) for the rate of subsidy during school holidays when children attend full day care. A separate benefit amount is awarded for

each type of care. In order for your benefit to be properly calculated and paid, the provider will need to submit their most current child care costs on record in order for the correct Army Fee Assistance amount to be paid on your behalf.

What if I send my child for summer care or during other school holidays and breaks?

Yes, the Army Fee Assistance Program covers child care during the summer and school holidays and breaks if Sponsor and provider are eligible.

Can I receive an Army child care subsidy for summer child care if I work, but my spouse stays at home with younger children?

In order to qualify for Army Fee Assistance, both parents or the Sponsor and their spouse/partner must be working or attending school outside of the home.

What about overnight camps?

The Army does not subsidize overnight camps.

My child/children will be attending a before and/or after school program located in my child's/children's school. Will this program qualify?

In order to qualify for the Army Fee Assistance Program, the school district program must meet the following guidelines:

- * The program must be housed on school property.
- * The caregivers operating the program must be school district personnel.

Note: If the program is operated by subcontractors, they must have a state license to operate a child care program and must meet standard child care provider requirements.

Do any other special family circumstances affect eligibility?

Eligibility is based on the Sponsor's status, availability of child care at the Army installation, the number of dependent children for whom the Sponsor is paying child care costs, and the actual child care expenses. Special financial situations will be considered if applicants present their circumstances in writing.

My Provider

What types of child care programs qualify?

- State licensed/certified and inspected annually.
- Must comply with State regulated background check requirements.
- Voluntarily agree to become licensed if they hold an exemption from licensing certification in their State.

- Current Inspection Report with no disqualifying incidents.
- Accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body with the exception of OMCC, and ACCYN/ASPN who are in the process of obtaining Accreditation.

In home nannies and situations where child care is given within the home where the child resides are not covered by the Army Fee Assistance Program.

How do I change providers?

If you are currently receiving Army Fee Assistance

If Army Fee Assistance is currently being paid on your behalf, your provider should indicate on the Invoice & Attendance Form Army Form 2002-02 by placing a “T” for terminating care, or you should send an email to our office informing GSA of the final day to pay Army Fee Assistance to the provider currently on file. You will need to complete and return the [Provider Change Request Packet \(Form Army 2014-17\)](#).

If you are currently in an Inactive Status

If you are currently in an Inactive Status, you must complete and return the [Request to Reactivate Benefit Packet](#) which will provide you with the opportunity to change providers.

My provider has changed their banking information. What documentation is needed by GSA?

Please have your provider email GSA at childcareprovider@gsa.gov to request the form to update their information with GSA. This form is also available on GSA’s Army Fee Assistance website on the [For Providers](#) page.

Can Army Fee Assistance affect other subsidies that I am currently receiving from my child care provider?

Yes, receiving Army Fee Assistance will affect other programs in which you are enrolled. If you are currently receiving any other subsidy or discount, you and your child care provider should have informed GSA at the time that your child’s rate and enrollment information was verified. Army Fee Assistance is calculated upon the total final cost after any and all other discounts and/or subsidies.

Is this a new subsidy or discount? If so, GSA will contact your provider to verify this information and will update your case file accordingly and inform you and your provider of any changes to your benefit.

What providers are eligible?

Child care providers participating in the Army Fee Assistance Program must meet the following criteria and have the applicable documents on file with GSA in order to be eligible:

- Be state licensed/certified and inspected annually.
- Voluntarily agree to become licensed if they hold an exemption from licensing certification in their state.
- Current inspection report with no disqualifying incidents.
- Comply with state regulated background check requirements, as set forth by the state which your child care facility/home is licensed to operate.
- Some, but not all, benefits are contingent upon program accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting body.

Army Fee Assistance cannot be paid when parents use unregulated care, to include friends, relatives, neighbors or others who care for your children.

Nannies that reside in the home with your child or come into your home on a daily or weekly basis to care for your child or children are not considered eligible providers under Army Fee Assistance guidelines.

My provider charges a separate fee for enrollment or an annual registration fee.

Would these fees be covered under this program benefit?

Registration fees up to \$150 may be covered if they are required fees charged to all families to include enrollment and/or registration fees. Your provider will need to submit a separate invoice for the fee, which upon receipt and verification of eligibility, will be processed for payment to the provider directly.

My child care provider offers special classes and/or field trips that I would like my child to attend. Would these fees be covered?

Yes, if the class or field trip is required of all children who attend the facility and they appear on the provider form as part of the weekly fee. Otherwise the cost of field trip or special classes will not be covered.

Submitting Applications

How can I apply?

Visit GSA's website <http://www.gsa.gov/childcaresubsidies> to find the application package that you need. Under the [U.S. Army Fee Assistance](#) page heading on the left-hand menu you will see choices for [New Applications](#), [Recertification](#) and [Enrollment Changes](#). These pages contain links to the application packages.

Please note that you must use a child care provider who meets the Army standards and has been enrolled in the program. If your provider is not enrolled, please refer them to the page titled For Providers for instructions on enrolling. Your application cannot be processed until you selected an enrolled provider and have an enrollment date for your child.

Who will review my application?

The Army Fee Assistance Program is administered by GSA, who receives and reviews applications based upon guidance provided the Army.

If I need to have my spouse or partner sign documents or obtain information from GSA about my case, how do we proceed?

In order for your spouse or partner to sign forms, you must submit a signed Power of Attorney (PoA) document. If you want to authorize GSA to share information about your case with your spouse, partner or other representative, you may do so in Section II of the Family Application Form. This section was added in August 2015. If you used a previous version of the application, you may submit a digitally signed email or signed letter authorizing a representative.

If we are a dual military family who are both Army, which parent should submit the application?

Either parent may complete the application.

I understand that I need to complete the Recertification process. Why am I required to complete this process since I'm already enrolled?

As part of Army Fee Assistance policy, all Army Sponsors are required to recertify annually.

I would like to enroll my child in the program; however, he or she will not be starting right away. When should I submit my application for benefits?

The complete application package should be submitted within 90 days of the enrollment date for your child/children. Application packages that reflect a start date of more than 90 days from the date of receipt will be declined and will require resubmission of some or all of the documents as the information must be current. You must have an agreed enrollment date with your provider in order for your application to be processed.

Is there any appeal process if my application is denied?

If your application is declined due to incomplete or incorrect information, you may appeal the decision by providing additional information to GSA.

If your application falls outside the program parameters based on your individual

circumstances, at your request GSA will forward your information to the Army for review and a final decision.

What is the status of my application?

You can obtain a status on your application by calling (866) 508-0371, Option 1 for families then Option 1 for Army. If the representative is unable to provide you with your specific status, your inquiry will be transferred to another representative or team leader who can help you.

Will families have to resubmit documentation if there have been no changes to financial arrangements?

All families are required to submit a re-certification application annually, including income documentation such as Leave and Earnings Statement.

How long does the application process take? When will I be informed of my benefit?

Each application received by GSA is reviewed in its entirety to ensure that all documents and information submitted meets the criteria set forth by the Army. Due to a substantial backlog of applications, it may be several weeks before your application is validated and your benefit amount is determined. Please be assured that GSA will work as quickly as possible to process each application, ensuring each family receives the benefit amount for which it is qualified.

Enrollment Changes

How do I add a child or children to the child care subsidy program?

In order to add a child or children to the program, you will need to complete and submit the [Adding Child Packet \(Army Form 2014-19\)](#).

Upon receipt of this information, GSA will recalculate your benefit amount and notify you and your child care provider via email and provide new invoices and invoicing instructions. Adding a child may affect the benefit calculations of all children enrolled.

My child care provider has informed me that my child care rate is changing. What do I need to do?

Please have the provider download the [Provider Cost Verification Form \(Ages 0 - Preschool\)](#) or [Provider Cost Verification Form \(Ages 5 - 12\)](#) from the [Forms Library](#) page on GSA's website <http://www.gsa.gov/childcaresubsidies>. The form must be submitted to army.childcare@gsa.gov.

I wish to remove one of my children from the program; however my other child/children will remain enrolled. How do I complete this process?

Will your child be removed longer than 90 days? If so, then you will need to complete and submit the [Certification for Removing Child/Children from the Program \(Army Form 2011-08\)](#). Upon receipt of this information, GSA will update your case file and notify you via email that the process is complete. If you wish to remove your child for 90 days or less, you may be placed in an Inactive Status. You will need to submit the form [Request to Inactivate Benefits](#). Army Fee Assistance is not paid while you are in inactive status.

When your child is ready to return to child care, please submit the form titled [Request to Reactivate Benefits](#).

I will be relocating due to a PCS move but wish to remain in the program, what do I need to do?

You have the option of being placed in an Inactive Status by completing and submitting the [Request for Benefit to be Placed in an INACTIVE STATUS Army Form 2011-13](#) to ensure that your case information remains current and accurate. Once you have relocated, found a new provider and wish to reactivate your benefit, please complete the [Request to Reactivate Benefits](#) form. You must contact your local CYSS first before reapplying for Army Fee Assistance, and obtain a signed [Certification of Availability / Non-Availability](#) from your new installation unless you are a Recruiter, geographically dispersed, your child is school age or you are assigned to a non-Army managed joint base.

If your case remains in an Inactive Status for longer than 90 days, you may be removed from the program and would need to reapply for benefits once you wish to begin receiving AFA.

I have completed my PCS move and need to re-enroll. What does GSA need from me?

In order to reactivate Army Fee Assistance, you will need to complete an application package providing GSA with updated documents and information. Please visit our [website](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/205731) (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/205731>) and select the applicable Recertification Package based upon your eligibility status.

What happens if I get married, divorced, separated or experience a change in my personal living arrangements. Does this affect my benefit?

Yes. Any one of these events *may* affect your eligibility for benefits. You are responsible for timely reporting to GSA of any changes in your personal and/or financial situation or that of your spouse partner.

Marriage: Your benefit will be recalculated with an effective date of two weeks after the date of marriage. You are required to provide the following:

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Copy of Marriage License
- ✓ Copy of spouse/partner's most recent Federal Tax Return 1040 (first two pages plus Schedule C if self-employed)
- ✓ 4 weeks/1 month of pay statements or a current school schedule (if the Sponsor was married prior to the start of the current semester or start date of the document submitted, GSA will also need the prior semester schedule and [Army 2015-11 Certification for Higher Education Form](#)).

Partner has moved into the home: Your benefit will be recalculated with an effective date of two weeks after the date that the partner moved into the home

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Copy of partner's most recent Federal Tax Return 1040
- ✓ 4 weeks/1 month of pay statements or a current school schedule (if the Sponsor was married prior to the start of the current semester or start date of the document submitted, GSA would need the prior semester' schedule as well and [Army 2015-11 Certification for Higher Education Form](#))

Divorced - Sponsor has primary custody: If Sponsor has sole or primary physical custody. Your benefit amount may or may not be recalculated; each case is reviewed to determine if this is an option or needed.

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Copy of Divorce Decree
- ✓ Copy of Custody Agreement
- ✓ Current LES

Divorced - Sponsor does not have primary custody: If Sponsor does not have sole or primary physical custody. Your benefit amount may or may not be recalculated; each case is reviewed to determine if this is an option or needed.

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Copy of Divorce Decree
- ✓ Copy of Custody Agreement
- ✓ Current LES
- ✓ Ex-spouse's 4 weeks/1 month of pay statements or a current school schedule (if the Sponsor was married prior to the start of the current "semester" or start date of the document submitted, GSA will need the

prior “semester’s” schedule as well and [Army 2015-11 Certification for Higher Education Form](#))

Partner/child’s mother or father has left the home - Sponsor has primary custody: If Sponsor has sole or primary physical custody, AFA may or may not be recalculated; each case is reviewed to determine if this is an option or needed.

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Copy of Divorce Decree
- ✓ Copy of Custody Agreement
- ✓ Current LES

Partner/child’s mother or father has left the home - Sponsor does not have primary custody: If Sponsor does not have sole or primary physical custody, AFA may or may not be recalculated; each case is reviewed to determine if this is an option or needed.

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Copy of Divorce Decree
- ✓ Copy of Custody Agreement
- ✓ Current LES
- ✓ Ex-spouse’s 4 weeks/1 month of pay statements or a current school schedule (if the Sponsor was married prior to the start of the current “semester” or start date of the document submitted, GSA will need the prior “semester’s” schedule as well and [Army 2015-11 Certification for Higher Education Form](#))
- ✓ The child must live with the Sponsor 25% of the time.

Spouse left the home; no legal documents have been filed - Sponsor has primary custody: If Sponsor has sole or primary physical custody, your benefit amount may or may not be recalculated; each case is reviewed to determine if this is an option or needed.

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Army 2010-03 - Separation Verification Form
- ✓ Army 2013-05 - Certification of Custody
- ✓ Current LES

Spouse has left the home; no legal documents have been filed - Sponsor does not have primary custody: If the Sponsor does not have sole or primary physical custody. Your benefit amount may or may not be recalculated; each case is reviewed to determine if this is an option or needed.

- ✓ [Family Application Army 2014-01](#)
- ✓ Army 2010-03 - Separation Verification Form
- ✓ Current LES
- ✓ Ex-spouse's 4 weeks/1 month of pay statements or a current school schedule (if the Sponsor was married prior to the start of the current "semester" or start date of the document submitted, GSA will need the prior "semester's" schedule as well and [Army 2015-11 Certification for Higher Education Form](#))

I no longer need the benefit and would like to be removed from program. What should I do?

You will need to complete and submit the [Certification for Withdrawing from the the AFA Program Army Form 2011-08](#). Upon receipt of this information, GSA will notify you that you have been officially removed from the program. Please note that you may reapply for benefits at any time in the future by submitting an application to GSA.

We just learned that we are having a baby; when can we enroll our child in the program?

Please submit the form to [Adding Child Packet \(Army Form 2014-19\)](#) to GSA 30 days prior to your child's first day in child care. You may not enroll before your child is born (must provide a birth date), and you must have an agreed upon enrollment date with your provider.

My child will be spending the summer with her/his father/mother and I won't be needing child care. What do I need to do?

If you will not need care for less than 90 days: You may be placed in an Inactive Status while your child/children are not attending child care. In order to update your case file accordingly, you will need to complete and submit the AFA Request for Benefit to be placed in an [Inactive Status Form Army 2011-13](#). AFA is not paid while you are in inactive status.

When your child is ready to return to child care, please contact GSA as soon as you have the official re-enrollment date. You will then receive instructions on [Reactivating your AFA](#).

If you will not need care for more than 90 days: You will be officially removed from the program, however you may reapply at any time in the future by visiting our website or by contacting our office to re-apply for AFA.

In order to withdraw from the program, you will need to complete and submit the [Request to Withdraw from the AFA Program Army Form 2011-08](#) to GSA to update your case file accordingly.

Please note that if you wish to re-apply for benefits in the future, you may visit GSA's website or you may contact this office for an [updated application package](#).

My spouse/partner or I will be returning from deployment. What does GSA need from us?

GSA needs a copy of your orders within 90 days of deployment in order to calculate eligible deployment discounts. Once the orders are received, please forward a copy directly to GSA at army.childcare@gsa.gov or via fax to 816-826-5410. Upon receipt and review of the orders, GSA will update your case file and inform you and your Provider of any updates that may occur.

My spouse's/partner's deployment will soon be over. Will we still qualify Army Fee Assistance?

The Sponsor/Family's eligibility to participate in the Army Fee Assistance Program is determined by their status as an Army Sponsor.

- Families of Active and Reserve Component Soldiers (Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers must be activated to be eligible.).
- Department of the Army Civilians (both Appropriated and Non-Appropriated Funded Employees) and those assigned to Army supported Joint Base Installations who are in support of the Army mission.
- Deployed Soldiers must submit a copy of their orders as proof of deployment status. (Reserve Component soldiers may substitute a letter from their Commander in lieu of military orders, in the event that military orders have not yet been issued but are forthcoming.).
- Deployment Orders will be required within 90 days of eligibility being determined.
- Deployment Orders are valid for 30 days prior to deployment and 90 days after return and Fee Assistance payments are authorized during that timeframe.
- Wounded Warrior status is provided to soldiers assigned to WTB or WTU or who are receiving inpatient or out-patient care for extended periods of time.
- Survivors of Fallen Soldiers status is provided to families of soldiers who die or are killed while on active duty on or after 11 September 2001.

My spouse/partner's deployment will be coming to end. How long are we eligible for benefits?

Deployed Sponsors/families are eligible to receive Army Fee Assistance 30 days prior to and 90 days after the Sponsor's return from deployment based upon the return date as listed on the Sponsor's deployment orders.

My spouse/partner is/will no longer be in an Activated Status. What does GSA need from us?

If you spouse/partner is no longer in an Activated Status, then you will need to complete and submit the [Certification for Withdrawing from the AFA Program Army Form 2011-08](#). Upon receipt of this information, the GSA will update your case file and notify you that you have been officially removed from the program.

Please note that you may reapply for benefits at any time in the future if you become eligible.

Subsidy Determination

What is Total Family Income (TFI) and how is it calculated?

TFI is all earned income including wages, salaries, tips, special duty pay (flight pay, active duty demo pay, sea pay), and active duty save pay, long-term disability benefits, voluntary salary deferrals, retirement or other pension income including SSI paid to the spouse and VA benefits paid to the surviving spouse before deductions for taxes. TFI calculations must also include quarters subsistence and other allowances appropriate for the rank and status of military or civilian personnel, whether received in cash or in kind. For dual military families living in government quarters, Basic Allowance for Housing with Dependents Rate (BAH RC/T) of the senior member only is included. Rather than use the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) listed on the Leave and Earning Statement (LES), installations must use the Non-Locality Basic Allowance for Housing with Dependents Rate (BAH RC/T) for all members, regardless of whether they live in government housing or off the installation.

Why is the allowance for housing included in the total family income computation?

Section 1793(a) of Title 10, United States Code requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to establish DoD wide uniform child care fees based on total family income (TFI). In 1990, when the fee policy was first established, the family's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 1040 was used to determine TFI.

In 1993, the definition of TFI was changed to be consistent with the Internal Revenue Code's definition for military members claiming Earned Income Tax Credit for Child Care. According to the IRS definition, TFI comprises all earned income to include wages, salaries, tips, long

term disability, voluntary salary deferrals, quarters allowances (BAQ), subsistence allowances (BAS), and in-kind quarters and subsistence received by military members, and anything else of value, even if not taxable. Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH Type II) was used instead of BAQ because of changes to the housing allowance system in 1998.

The computation of TFI is based on earned income rather than disposable income. The BAH used to calculate TFI represents an in-kind service that you receive in lieu of a housing payment. As noted above, subsistence allowance is included in the category of earned income.

How is TFI calculated for non-related families or non-married couples and for couples who are geographically separated?

In households where non-related families are living in the same residence, the income of all adults who financially contribute to the welfare of the child is included. In households where the parents are married or in a legal partnership and the custodial parent is geographically separated from the sponsor, the income of both is included.

How is the income of spouses or partners who work on commission and who do not have a previous tax return calculated?

Based on DoD guidance individuals who have no employment income history and whose income fluctuates throughout the year must provide an employer estimate of the anticipated earnings. Individuals who are self-employed are required to provide an estimate of annual earnings.

How is the income for individuals who own their own business calculated?

Based on DoD guidance the TFI is calculated using the business net income.

What happens if I do not provide the required income documents to determine my TFI Category?

Families who do not show proof of income are charged the TFI Category 9 fee. The table below contains the TFI categories:

SY 2014-2015 DoD Total Family Income (TFI) Categories	
1	\$0 - \$30,466
2	\$30,467 - \$36,993
3	\$36,994 - \$47,873
4	\$47,874 - \$59,841
5	\$59,842 - \$76,162

6	\$76,163 - \$88,079
7	\$88,080 - \$103,622
8	\$103,623 - \$129,572
9	\$129,573 +

Do families having more than one child enrolled in child care receive a discount under Army Fee Assistance?

Yes. The full fee is paid for the child enrolled in the most expensive child care option and the remaining children receive a 15% Multiple Child Reduction (MCR).

Does the Army have to follow the DoD Child Care Fee Policy?

Yes. The Military Child Care Act of 1989, codified in Section 568 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 1996, requires the DoD to establish DoD-wide uniform child care fees based on TFI for use by all branches of the Service.

Will I need to have my TFI category revalidated?

TFI is generally only validated during annual recertification. Exceptions include when spouses find or lose employment and/or there are reductions in TFI.

Is there an upper income limit on subsidy eligibility?

There is no limit; however, the sliding scale by which subsidy amounts are determined increases the family portion / obligation as your Total Family Income increases.

Is there a maximum amount of subsidy that can be paid to a provider for a family?

Yes. Participants will receive subsidies based on their TFI and actual childcare costs, only up to the provider cap of \$1,200 per child per month in standard cost areas and \$1,500 in high cost areas.

How does being a Geo-Bachelor affect my benefit?

The Army Fee Assistance Program guidelines state that the benefit is based upon the TFI of both parents/partners, regardless of their geographical location. Both incomes are included in the calculation of benefits.

Inactive Status

I will not need the benefit for the summer or while my child is with a relative during the summer, winter break, spring break, etc. What do I need to do?

Army program guidelines allow for Sponsors/Families to remain in the program for up to 90 days in an Inactive Status. The Sponsor/Family must return to an Active Status within 90 days or they will be removed from the program.

Once removed, the Sponsor may reapply at any time in the future by completing the [applicable application package](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/164623) located on GSA's website <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/164623>.

How can I be placed in an Inactive Status?

The Sponsor or designee will need to complete and submit to GSA the [Request for Benefit to be Placed in an INACTIVE STATUS \(Army Form 2011-13\)](#) to ensure that your case information remains current and accurate. AFA is not paid while you are in an inactive status.

How do I reactivate my benefit when my child/children return to child care?

The Sponsors or designee will need to complete and submit to GSA the [Request to Reactivate Benefits Packet Army 2011-07](#) to update case information.

Benefits

How can my spouse/partner obtain information about my benefit if I am unable to contact GSA due to my deployment or in my absence?

GSA introduced a new application form in August 2015 that allows the Sponsor to authorize a representative to communicate with GSA about the application on his or her behalf. If you submitted this form and authorized a representative, you do not need to submit a Power of Attorney. If you used a previous version of the application, you may submit a digitally signed email or signed letter authorizing a representative.

My provider changed their rate and I just received my updated benefit letter. Why did my portion stay the same?

Army Fee Assistance is based upon several factors: your Total Family Income (TFI); your child's age; the type of care being provided (full time, part time, before school, after school, the rates at the nearest Army installation, etc.) and the maximum benefit allowed upon the AFA guidelines of \$1,200 per month per child. Once TFI is calculated using Army guidelines, benefit amounts may change due to a change in the provider's rates. The Sponsor's portion will be based on parent fees charged at Army installations.

- If your provider **increases** your child's rate and you are not at your maximum benefit, your portion will continue to remain the same and the AFA will increase.
- If your provider **reduces** your child's rate and you are not at your maximum benefit, your portion will remain the same as the Army Fee Assistance will decrease as you are financially responsible for the Sponsor/family portion prior to Army Fee Assistance being paid.
- If you were already receiving the maximum benefit, then your portion

will decrease and Army Fee Assistance will adjust accordingly as to not exceed the maximum Army Fee Assistance allowed of \$1,200.

Invoices

I understand that the Army requires that I sign each invoice submitted to GSA for payment. Why is this required?

The Army requires that each invoice submitted to GSA be signed by the eligible Sponsor or designee certifying that the child attended the center for the period billed and that the charged rate is correct.

I understand that the Army requires that I sign the invoices submitted to GSA. If I am deployed or unable to sign, can someone else sign in my absence?

If you are legally married, then your spouse can sign on your behalf. If you are single or separated then the Army requires that the Sponsor authorizes a representative to sign invoices certifying the child's attendance at the center and the accuracy of the rate.

Subsidy Payments

How do I know if/when my child care provider is being paid?

You are required to sign invoices monthly which are then to be submitted to GSA for payment certifying your child or children's attendance and cost. Once signed, your child care provider should submit the invoice/invoices directly to GSA for payment. Please ensure that you, your spouse or designee are completing this process to ensure payments are made in a timely manner on your behalf. Once your provider receives payment, this should be reflected on your statement from the provider as a credit to your account.

How often are payments made to providers?

Upon receipt of a completed Invoice and Attendance Form and validation that your case is current (orders are valid, and if your spouse/partner is a student, his or her school schedule is current). GSA processes payments daily and submits the payment request to the U.S. treasury, who will disburse the payment directly to the provider. Payments issued via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) are typically deposited in the payee's bank account within five business days of processing. For payments issued via check, the process may take 10 business days to allow for the U.S. Treasury to issue payment and the U.S. Postal Service to deliver payment.

My application was approved for the Annual Two Week Enrollment Credit (ATWEC). I don't understand.

Sponsors whose application is processed and their calculated costs do not exceed what they would pay for on-post care at the nearest Army installation are awarded an Annual Two Week Enrollment Credit in lieu of a monthly AFA subsidy. The Army will pay the child care fee for the first two weeks of care plus up to \$150 registration/enrollment fee for completing and submitting the Family application.

If the Sponsor accepts ATWEC, they would not be eligible to receive Army Fee Assistance for another child care provider for one year from the date of the ATWEC Period of Service*.

****Exceptions:***

- *The child care provider closes their doors, the Sponsor/family may reapply for Army Fee Assistance using another child care provider as this is no fault or decision by the parent.*
- *The Sponsor/family PCSs, again, this is an instance where the family has no choice in the matter.*
- *The child care provider was disqualified by GSA and is no longer considered a qualifying participating provider. Again, this is an instance where the family has no choice in the matter.*

Appendix

Forms associated with the Army Fee Assistance Program

Forms are located on GSA's website unless otherwise indicated below.

Forms Library: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/233375>

New Application Packages: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/107399>

Recertification Packages: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/205731>